



Four-year-old Glenda Norris isn't really crying—photographers just leave her shy. Mrs. George Vail and her daughter Janet, 3, accompany Glenda on a visit to the Fairfax County bookmobile during its stop at Sleepy Hollow, Va.



Mrs. Harold Niebel and Mrs. John M. Davies III, Ravenwood, select books.  
Star Staff Photos by A. C. Chinn.

## Library on Wheels

LITERARY DIVERSION for both old and young is carried into the "backwoods" regions of nearby counties by traveling libraries.

Both Fairfax County in Virginia and Prince Georges County in Maryland have mobile adjuncts of their public library systems to carry books to people in remote areas who don't have public libraries close by.

Typical of a day with a "bookmobile" are these scenes taken during a trip with the Fairfax County unit. The bus starts from the Fairfax Public Library at 9 a.m. and gets back at about 4:30 p.m., after making some 10 stops of from a half-hour to an hour each, depending on the number of "customers" at each stop.

This bus makes 12 trips a month, following a different route each time. The bookmobile crew consists of the driver, Henry Ambler, Clifton, Va., and a librarian. In this case, the librarian was Mrs. Helen Davis of Merrifield, Va.

At almost every stop, the bus is besieged by housewives and children laden with books they want to exchange for new ones. Each trip is scheduled so that the residents

along the way know when and where to expect the bus on its monthly visit. Stopping places include playgrounds, private homes, some of which serve as sublibraries for people who couldn't manage to meet the bookmobile; stores and simply clearings in the center of a small community. In July, the Fairfax bookmobile circulated some 5,000 books. Mr. Ambler says he drives more than 500 miles a month, covering just about every remote outpost of Fairfax County.

Included on the bookshelves are everything from Plato's "Republic" to "Tom Tit-Tot"—recondite volumes for intellectual elders and picture books for swaddling youngsters.

The heavy stuff, however, is in little demand.

"Seems like they want mysteries mostly," says Mrs. Davis. "Especially in summer."

At one stop a 7-year-old boy showed up with an armful of children's books and said: "My little sister, she scribbled up these books, and my mama asked what she should do about it."

What, shrugs Mrs. Davis, can one do about it?—A. C.